

**What is claimed is:**

1 1. A tonneau cover apparatus for removably attaching a flexible cover about a  
2 perimeter of a cargo box and tailgate of a pickup truck, the tonneau cover apparatus  
3 comprising:

4  
5 a support frame, the support frame removably attached about the cargo box of the  
6 pickup truck;

7  
8 an end plate engagement member, the end plate engagement member being  
9 attached to the support frame, the end plate engagement member configured to engage  
10 and receive a portion of the end plate as the end plate is translated and pivoted into and  
11 out of a fixed stretching position in which a tension is placed upon the flexible cover;

12  
13 an end plate, the end plate being attached to an end of a flexible cover, the end  
14 plate configured to cooperatively engage and pivot with respect to the end plate  
15 engagement member and into and out of the fixed stretching position wherein the flexible  
16 cover can be correspondingly be tensed and relaxed; the end plate having a radial  
17 engaging surface and the end plate engagement member having a receiving surface which  
18 engages the radial engaging surface when the end plate pivots into the fixed stretching  
19 position.

1 2. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 1, wherein the end plate engagement  
2 member has a radial receiving surface which engages the radial engaging surface when  
3 the end plate pivots into the fixed stretching position.

1 3. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 1, further including a locking member, the  
2 locking member operatively connected to the end plate rearward of the end plate  
3 engagement member when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position; the locking  
4 member being moveable between a first position and a second position, wherein the

5 locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the fixed stretching  
6 position when the locking member is in the first position, and wherein the end plate can  
7 be disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the  
8 second position.

1 4. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 3, wherein the perimeter of the cargo box  
2 includes a forward end and two opposing sidewalls; the support frame includes two  
3 opposing side rails, one of which is secured to each of the respective opposing side walls;  
4 the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second end plate engagement member;  
5 each of the end plate engagement members being attached to one of the two side rails  
6 attached to the two opposing side walls; wherein the side rails each have an inwardly  
7 extending flange portion and the locking member includes a finger portion, the finger  
8 portion of the locking member being positioned below the respective inwardly extending  
9 flange portion when the locking member is in the first position such that the end plate  
10 cannot be disengaged from the end plate engagement member, because the finger portion  
11 is restrained by the inwardly extending flange, the finger portion of the locking member  
12 being removed from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is  
13 moved from the first position to the second position such that the end plate can be  
14 disengaged from the end plate engagement member when the locking member is in the  
15 second position.

1 5. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the locking member  
2 includes an upper portion which is slidably retained within the end plate, and the finger  
3 portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main  
4 body of the upper portion.

1 6. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the end plate includes  
2 a channel having a cross-sectional shape which is smaller at the bottom and larger at the  
3 top so that it has a generally "T" shaped configuration.

1 7. A tonneau cover apparatus for removably attaching a flexible cover about a  
2 perimeter of a cargo box and tailgate of a pickup truck, the tonneau cover apparatus  
3 comprising:

4  
5 a support frame, the support frame removably attached about the cargo box of the  
6 pickup truck;

7  
8 an end plate engagement member, the end plate engagement member being  
9 attached to the support frame, the end plate engagement member configured to engage  
10 and receive a portion of the end plate as the end plate is translated and pivoted into and  
11 out of a fixed stretching position in which a tension is placed upon the flexible cover;

12  
13 an end plate, the end plate being attached to an end of a flexible cover, the end  
14 plate configured to cooperatively engage and pivot with respect to the end plate  
15 engagement member and into and out of the fixed stretching position wherein the flexible  
16 cover can be correspondingly be tensed and relaxed; the end plate engagement member  
17 having a radial receiving surface and the end plate having a radial engaging surface  
18 which engages the radial receiving surface when the end plate pivots into the fixed  
19 stretching position.

1 8. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 7, further including a locking member, the  
2 locking member operatively connected to the end plate rearward of the end plate  
3 engagement member when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position; the locking  
4 member being moveable between a first position and a second position, wherein the  
5 locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the fixed stretching  
6 position when the locking member is in the first position, and wherein the end plate can  
7 be disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the  
8 second position.

1 9. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 7, wherein the perimeter of the cargo box  
2 includes a forward end and two opposing sidewalls; the support frame includes two

3 opposing side rails, one of which is secured to each of the respective opposing side walls;  
4 the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second end plate engagement member;  
5 each of the end plate engagement members being attached to one of the two side rails  
6 attached to the two opposing side walls; wherein the side rails each have an inwardly  
7 extending flange portion and the locking member includes a finger portion, the finger  
8 portion of the locking member being positioned below the respective inwardly extending  
9 flange portion when the locking member is in the first position such that the end plate  
10 cannot be disengaged from the end plate engagement member, because the finger portion  
11 is restrained by the inwardly extending flange, the finger portion of the locking member  
12 being removed from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is  
13 moved from the first position to the second position such that the end plate can be  
14 disengaged from the end plate engagement member when the locking member is in the  
15 second position.

1 10. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the locking member  
2 includes an upper portion which is slidably retained within the end plate, and the finger  
3 portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main  
4 body of the upper portion.

1 11. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the end plate includes  
2 a channel having a cross-sectional shape which is smaller at the bottom and larger at the  
3 top so that it has a generally "T" shaped configuration.

1 12. A tonneau cover apparatus for removably attaching a flexible cover about a top of  
2 a perimeter of a cargo box of a pickup truck, the perimeter of the cargo box including a  
3 forward end, two opposing sidewalls and a tailgate, the tailgate being positioned rearward  
4 of the forward end and having an open position and a closed position, the flexible cover  
5 having first and second ends, the tonneau cover apparatus comprising:

6  
7 a support frame including two opposing side rails and a pair of end plate  
8 engagement members, one of which is secured to each of the respective opposing side

rails rearward of the forward end, the support frame being removably attached to the cargo box of the pickup truck;

an end plate attached to the second end of the flexible cover, the end plate configured to cooperatively engage and pivot with respect to each of the respective end plate engagement members; wherein the end plate engagement members cooperate to engage the end plate when the first end of the flexible cover is operatively connected to the support frame forward of the respective engagement members, such that the end plate can pivot into and out of a fixed stretching position wherein the flexible cover is stretched to place a tension on the flexible cover; the end plate having a radial engaging surface and each of the end plate engagement members having a receiving surface which engages a portion of the radial engaging surface when the end plate pivots into the fixed stretching position; and

a locking member, the locking member operatively connected to the end plate rearward of the each of the end plate engagement members when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position and movable between a first position and a second position when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position; wherein the locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the first position, and wherein the end plate can be disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the second position.

13. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 12, wherein the end plate engagement members have radial receiving surfaces which engage portions of the radial engaging surface when the end plate pivots into the fixed stretching position.

14. The tonneau cover apparatus of claim 13, wherein the perimeter of the cargo box includes a forward end and two opposing sidewalls; the support frame includes two opposing side rails, one of which is secured to each of the respective opposing side walls; the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second end plate engagement member; each of the end plate engagement members being attached to one of the two side rails

6 attached to the two opposing side walls; wherein the side rails each have an inwardly  
7 extending flange portion and the locking member includes a finger portion, the finger  
8 portion of the locking member being positioned below the respective inwardly extending  
9 flange portion when the locking member is in the first position such that the end plate  
10 cannot be disengaged from the end plate engagement member, because the finger portion  
11 is restrained by the inwardly extending flange, the finger portion of the locking member  
12 being removed from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is  
13 moved from the first position to the second position such that the end plate can be  
14 disengaged from the end plate engagement member when the locking member is in the  
15 second position.

1 15. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the locking member  
2 includes an upper portion which is slidably retained within the end plate, and the finger  
3 portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main  
4 body of the upper portion.

1 16. The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the end plate  
2 includes a channel having a cross-sectional shape which is smaller at the bottom and  
3 larger at the top so that it has a generally "T" shaped configuration.